

ON THE CAUSES
OF
EPIDEMIC FEVER
IN THE
METROPOLIS,
MORE ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS THE CONDITION
OF THE
LABOURING CLASSES.

BY

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“Remember, man! the Universal Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen’ral laws;
And makes what happiness we justly call,
Subsist—not in the good of one, but *all*.”—POPE.

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ON THE CAUSES
OF
EPIDEMIC FEVER
IN
THE METROPOLIS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Fever and the London Hospitals.

THAT a fever of a low and insidious character does from time to time visit the metropolis, and that such a fever has lately prevailed in a most alarming degree, is already known, the subject having been referred to at the recent meetings of the friends of the London Fever Hospital, "to take into consideration the means of enlarging that valuable institution," which at present affords accommodation for only sixty patients; and this, be it remembered, is the sole provision that is made under the greatest emergency, for a population of a million and a half of people! It is a melancholy fact, that for some time the committee of this valuable institution were under the necessity of closing the doors; and so numerous were the applications for admission, that patients were every day sent back to their wretched dwellings to die. At St. Bartholomew's Hospital some of the nurses and pupils have fallen a sacrifice. At the institution to which I myself belong, we have lost two of our apothecaries during the last eighteen months; and our present resident medical officer has but lately recovered from typhus, which had brought him to death's door. The Hospitals have now come to the determination not to admit, in future, fever cases at all; and I would ask what, under these circumstances, are the indus-

Deplorable
situation of the
Destitute
Sick.

trious classes to do? However ill they may be, they cannot be taken into the workhouses. Shunned by their neighbours, perhaps, and having parted by degrees with nearly all they possess, we find them, many at least, destitute of the most common necessities of life. They are sick and dejected; several members of the same family are to be seen lying on the floor, upon a bed of straw, with scarcely any covering, no change of linen, no nurse, no friend to help them to so much as a cup of water to slake their parching thirst; and this is not always the result of intemperance and dissipation. The most formidable disease will suddenly make its appearance, and steal insidiously from room to room, and from door to door; its course and progress may be regularly traced. I have known the same fever attack, in succession, different families that have occupied the same apartments, the result partly of contagion, and partly of the continued operation of the same causes. There is no mystery about it, nor is there any thing imaginary in it, as those will see who take the trouble to investigate the fact. I repeat, *it is the existence of these causes* which we have to thank for the prevalence of fever in the metropolis. What then are these causes? At any such alarming crisis this is confessedly a very important question, and I will answer it by a statement of facts which I am prepared to prove.

The enemy with which we have to contend is one of a very insidious character. Its attacks may not be always alike, or equally terrible; but "the tiger is most dangerous when he crouches," and "the fox retreats and doubles only to deceive the hunter." Just so it is with fever; ever treacherous and rapacious, it is indeed the scourge of the human race; and in proportion as its victims diminish, something may and should be done to prevent a repetition of its incursions: but as long as the fostering evils are disregarded, the most loathsome diseases will continue to prevail. Our efforts may, for a period, arrest their progress, but if a proper inquiry be not instituted, and suitable measures taken to discover and root out the germs from which they spring, they will assuredly return with redoubled violence as the seasons revolve. What says the proverb? "Prudence, not less than prowess, becometh the brave: but he who grasps a naked sword shall be wounded with its edge." The philanthropist may do much, but now is the time for exertion before the winter sets in; we have already a specimen of what we are to expect. It is the province of the physician to stand fear-

lessly between life and death; but if discretion be the better part of valour, he will not shut his eyes to the dangers that await him, and recklessly precipitate himself down the abyss of death, whose fatal jaws are gaping beneath, ready every instant to engulf him in the gloom of eternal night. Experience teaches that there is a duty which he owes to himself and his family, as well as to his neighbour. The public do not always consider this, and they are quite ready to avail themselves of the services of professional men. But however generous and zealous we may be in exerting ourselves for the general good (and some cases of fever require to be visited twice, and even three times, in the twenty-four hours), I do say that it is asking too much to expect the medical officers of charitable institutions, who hold their appointments *gratuitously*, to expose their lives as they do, from day to day, when a great deal of the risk which they incur is to be attributed to the inattention and laxity of other parties, whose business it is, or should be, to remove public nuisances, and to keep a watchful eye upon the haunts of pauperism.

I shall be told, that in every dense population, degeneracy and wretchedness will be found, and that to these and the improvidence of the sufferers themselves, the germs of fever may be traced. That this is to a certain extent true I do not deny; but such cases form the exceptions only, and I will but ask the advocates of such a doctrine to visit the abodes of these unfortunate beings, and then to say whether the evils complained of exist or not. The efforts of the physician may do a great deal when aided by circumstances which favour the condition of the sick, to wit, cleanliness, good nursing, and wholesome air; but they can do comparatively little when his patients are huddled together in close, ill-ventilated apartments, surrounded by accumulations of filth, and in the most abject state of destitution. Disease is at all times dreadful to contemplate; but when it is associated with poverty, it is heart-rending in the extreme. Thanks to the exertions of those benevolent individuals who devote their time and the pecuniary means requisite to the effective working of the numerous medical charities of England, the poor have many resources. However great their troubles, consolation is more or less attempted to be afforded them, and there is always some good Samaritan at hand, ready to contribute, as far as he can, to their necessities. "He who walks under the shadow of the Most High, fears neither cold nor want: for the worm which He protects is greater than the dragon

The Medical Profession and the Public.

which defies him ! His breath scattereth armies, and princes are as the dust of his footstool !” * It is delightful to reflect that the days of speculation and ignorance have passed away, and that we are enabled, by the progress of science, to combat disease with confidence, and with better results than heretofore. “The drugs of the physician may sometimes give more pain than the disease they are meant to cure ; but it is a wholesome pain, and tends to health and comfort.” * There are certain things, however, which fall under the cognizance of landlords, the magistrates, and other authorities, and which, if duly attended to, would aid the endeavours of medical men very materially indeed. It is in the power of these gentlemen not only to facilitate the cure of disease, but to do much towards preventing its recurrence. Prevention is better than cure ; and it is a great desideratum so to regulate the dwellings and habits of the working classes, that they may keep at a distance every incentive to sickness. The lower orders are usually neglectful, improvident, careless, and apt to procrastinate. If indisposed, they put off the evil hour as long as they can, and do not seek advice until obliged, and when, I am sorry to say, it is often too late. If, then, they are so negligent of themselves, it is the more incumbent on others to think for them ; for it should not be forgotten that the well-being of the *rich* depends in a great degree on the respectable and healthy condition of the *poor* ; and it is well for them that there are establishments to which their suffering fellow-creatures can apply for relief when sick ; for if the ravages of disease were not checked in time, the wealthy would not sleep so quietly in their beds as they now do. It is the interest therefore as well as the duty of us *all* to keep a watchful eye upon our more humble neighbours ; and to adopt such measures as are calculated to improve their condition. It is obvious that this end can only be attained by a careful investigation of facts ; and it is the object of this essay to point out the necessities of those who inhabit certain crowded districts in the city, where confessedly they are exposed to risks, which in the more modern neighbourhoods at the west end of London are not equally incurred : and I trust that my remarks will be received in the same friendly spirit with which they are written.

The relation of the rich and poor.

* Oriental proverb.

The Science of Hygeia.

The public health should at all times, I conceive, be regarded as a subject of paramount importance; but strange to say, in the present enlightened state of society, in England there is no council of Hygeia—no board of health—no authorized body of any denomination, whose duty it is to *inquire into* the condition of the masses of human beings which are known to congregate in the more dense and confined regions of the metropolis, and other large towns. On the continent this would scarcely be believed; for in almost every foreign university there is a “chair of Hygiène” as an essential branch of education. My assertion, however, is nevertheless true; and it will be found upon inquiry, that although we have “parish officers,” “relieving officers,” “visiting committees,” “guardians of the poor,” &c., something else is wanting to form the connecting link in the chain of our philanthropy. There are still many things which require to be looked to, but of which the public functionaries take no cognizance. It is an undeniable fact that we have no such body as a board of health, to which any appeal can be made in time of need. There is an old saying, that “what is every one’s business, is nobody’s business;” and thus, though all may concur in the necessity of certain steps being taken, there appears to be no executive power: the matter, whatever it is, is talked about, forgotten, mentioned again, and again forgotten, and thus nothing is done. When, however, the cholera, or some other malignant disease which we are unaccustomed to, suddenly appears among us as an epidemic, we get frightened, and begin to bestir ourselves; but there is no attempt made at any other time to guard against the very evils which lead to such epidemics. It would seem that the cholera roused only by its *novelty*, or some inquiry would be instituted in order to ascertain the causes of other epidemics, to wit, malignant typhus and scarlet fevers, putrid sore throats, and the like, which never leave us entirely, and are annually as fatal as the cholera was, though people do not know it.

By the term “hygeia” is meant the “art of preserving health,” not as referrible only to medical men, but to *every guardian of the public safety*. It is a subject which concerns each citizen and householder, and there is not one exempt from the obligation of thus providing for the public

weal. In every crowded city, the most active vigilance is called for: and were it not for those extensive underground works, which astonished the Czar of Muscovy, when he visited the far-famed metropolis of England, it would be impossible for so many thousand families to assemble with impunity within her walls. But if such were the ease in the time of Peter the Great, how much more need is there of caution in the present day! True it is that great improvements are taking place; many of our public ways have been already widened, and the growing streets of the moderns far eclipse the dingy thoroughfares of our ancestors, to whom it was a matter of necessity to build their houses within the city walls; but it should be recollected that there is no such necessity now; and what is very important, the population of London is more than double what it then was. To judge correctly of this matter we must not confine our observations to the leading avenues; we should visit the abodes of destitution and disease, and perambulate the intricate windings, narrow lanes, and obscure courts and alleys, which communicate with the cellars, in which the unfortunate outcast is driven to seek an asylum, notwithstanding that they abound with noxious effluvia, and every description of filth, and are excluded alike from the sun's rays and the fresh air. These must be seen to be understood; and the public who do not interest themselves in such things, and those especially who are accustomed only to the luxury of the drawing-room, will hardly credit that they exist, for it is very seldom that they have an opportunity of exploring them.

The Science of Hygeia.

The science of Hygeia may properly be divided into three parts; that which refers to the faculty, the civil authorities, and the community at large.

The medical Hygeist.

It is the duty of the medical hygeist to look with calmness on every danger, and to advance unflinchingly to the combat, that he may arrest the progress of disease, and prevent its incursions in future. His life is a laborious and anxious one, and he feels that of himself he can do nothing, but that there is a Power above which aids and protects him. He considers it no ordinary privilege to be instrumental in alleviating human suffering, and he cheerfully stands forward at the call of the afflicted, ready to exercise his talents in their behalf. In order to qualify himself for his arduous and responsible duties, he spares neither labour nor expense that he may become intimate with the structure of the human frame, its organs, functions, and the endless changes to which it is liable, and that he may

thoroughly understand the qualities of those agents which either nature or art has placed at his disposal in the hour of need. It is remarkable that there is no country on the face of the earth which has not been supplied with all things essential to the happiness and well-being of its inhabitants. Whenever it has pleased the Almighty to visit us with affliction, we may rest assured that the same all-wise Providence has furnished also the means of relief; but it is left to man, by the employment of his intellectual faculties, to discover the agents which have been sent for his use, and to apply their virtues aright; for a spot will hardly be found on the habitable globe, which does not produce the remedies best suited to the maladies ordinarily incidental to the climate. I say ordinarily, because I do not allude to complaints which are the wages of debauchery and excess, and which have been entailed upon posterity by the grovelling and degenerate of our species. "The blessings of Providence are sent to cheer, not to intoxicate, the heart of man."

When we reflect on the subject, we must acknowledge The public Hygeist. that the science of Hygeia is one which is well worthy of the consideration of the state, and it is only surprising that it has been so long overlooked. The exertions of private individuals can effect comparatively little good; but aided by the public authorities, there are, I believe, few things which they may not accomplish. Many of the nuisances which exist in large towns, it will be said, are owing to the laxity of the inhabitants themselves: true, and for that reason the careless and idle require to be watched; but individuals have no power to enforce attention to cleanliness and other matters on which the health of the whole community depends. Nobody has *authority* to investigate such things; but were there proper persons appointed to regulate the dwellings of the poor, and to inquire into abuses or any neglect when pointed out, the inmates, instead of objecting to persons entering their houses to see to the removal of existing evils, would soon understand how much their comforts might be enhanced by such inquiry, and they would facilitate it by all the means in their power. The landlords too would be induced to promote the respectability of their tenants. Some of the industrious classes are as it is, very intelligent and respectable, and they form themselves into little social bodies, ready to make common cause for the protection of each other in the court and neighbourhood in which they dwell, and they would immediately concur in the system adopted. But there are

The pub-
licHygeist.

others who are invariably shunned by them, because they are dissipated and reckless; these not only neglect themselves and their children, but frequently interrupt the comfort and harmony of the whole district by reason of their dirty habits and idle propensities. Such, instead of being left to themselves as they are, might I think be placed under some sort of control; they might be taught to appreciate the comfort that results from cleanliness, and at all events, if they would not, or could not, they should be hindered from annoying other people. It is such persons as these that commonly sow the seeds of contagion. By reason of their dissipated habits, their constitutions become so impaired as to render them more susceptible of disease than others; they are so enervated that they are unable to bear frequently even simple remedies, and their complaints often assume the most appalling character, running their course very rapidly; and as advice is seldom sought until the malady has gained the ascendancy, a low and malignant fever supervenes, which not only proves fatal to the parties themselves, but is probably communicated to remoter districts. Who then is safe? A spirit of inquisition or the tyrannical indulgence of power would be at once revolting to the feelings of every Englishman. No man would submit to have his privacy and his domestic joys interrupted unnecessarily; but there is now too much good sense, and the public mind is too much enlightened to sanction any thing like intrusion on the part of the persons employed as inspectors.

The duty of the civil authorities I conceive to be, to inquire as a body, into the condition, not only of the public hospitals, prisons, streets, and highways, squares, markets, burial-grounds, slaughter-houses, *public baths*, &c., but it is imperative that they should see to the cleansing of all the roads, the courts and avenues leading from the public streets, the sewers, cess-pools, drains, gully-holes and gutters, the removal of decayed vegetable and animal matters, and whatever may obstruct the flow of water from the habitations of the poor as well as of the rich, or is calculated to generate noxious effluvia. This to a great extent has been attended to, and we enjoy many advantages; but considering the immensity of our population, a greater degree of vigilance is called for in London than elsewhere, and the intentions of the authorities cannot be too rigorously enforced. Why not empower each policeman and street-keeper to act as an inspector of the public ways? I remark a great deal of irregularity—

Cleansing
the courts
and alleys.

sometimes the courts are in decent order, and at others they are in a very neglected state. It is highly important that the scavenger be kept to his duty, instead of contenting himself with clearing the chief thoroughfares merely where he is observed. Those who contract to remove the filth which daily accumulates about the gully-holes of almost every court, require to be overlooked; and the duty of the public Hygeist does not end here:—it is equally important that he should from time to time visit the interior of the houses himself, and *see* the state in which the poor man lives. I am continually meeting with instances of neglect, such as call loudly for redress—evils which no private person can rectify, anxious as the parties themselves may be to better their condition; and I have frequently known men whose families had narrowly escaped from fever, give their landlords notice to quit as soon as convalescent, on account of the bad smell continually arising from the situation of the privy, state of the cess-pool or something else, the baneful effects of which they had so recently experienced. This is, perhaps, after all, one of the most urgent of his duties: but it has been hitherto omitted altogether; and as I am compelled every day of my life, to witness the consequences which ensue from such an oversight, I should be to blame if I did not call the attention of the magistrates to the subject. I should be the less excusable, because holding as I do a public appointment, I have opportunities of knowing that disease is now raging, and does from time to time so rage among the poor to a still greater extent, and that if some steps be not taken to remove such evils, we are not likely ever to find it otherwise, and sooner or later we may have reason to repent our neglect!

The public Hygeist.

Noxious effluvia.

This overlooking of the poor man's home has been thought by some to be the care rather of the private Hygeist: and this would possibly be the case if private individuals, who from feelings of philanthropy, interest themselves about the labouring classes, acted in concert, and had the power as well as the inclination to interfere in such matters. But they have no authority:—they act spontaneously, and might do much good by pointing out a proper course to others who were entrusted with such power:—but as there is no Council or Board of Health in the parish, they know not whom to apply to. Besides, such individuals visit the poor only when sickness has already commenced; and many of these humane persons are ladies, who cannot always do as their feelings dictate;

The Philanthropist or private Hygeist.

whereas they would have no difficulty were there a proper court of appeal consisting of persons resident in the neighbourhood, and headed by the officiating clergyman.

Were I disposed to enlarge upon this subject, I might say much, being practically acquainted with the labours of many excellent persons who are continually engaged in the cause of suffering humanity, but who might effect a great deal more than they do, and with much more ease to themselves, if such a plan were adopted. There are doubtless in every neighbourhood many to be found ready to sympathize with and relieve the distressed, but it is the effective, the operative part for which arrangement should be made. The private Hygeist may do much good, (especially if aided by an affable and sincere pastor,) by impressing upon the heads of families their respective duties, by advising them in regard to their habits, clothing, and domestic arrangements—by instructing them in the various arts of cooking, baking and so forth, by consoling them when sick, and providing the aged and destitute with linen, fuel, blankets, arrow-root, and other comforts. But without the co-operation of the constituted authorities of the district, they cannot arrest the progress of disease where the evils which gave rise to it are still allowed to remain, and depend upon the locality, the landlord, or something else over which they have no control.

In conclusion, let me ask, what can be expected from the physician under such circumstances? Yet daily is he called to witness such things at the imminent risk of his own life, and without hope of being able to save the lives of others, because either there are no public functionaries to aid him, or if there are, they leave many matters to the profession which they only can obviate, and refuse to interfere in what is hurtful to the body, whilst they alone possess the means of destroying that which is injurious to the public health!

Health and Longevity.

The essentials to health and longevity are—

1. Proper air, food, and clothing.
2. Cleanliness, temperance, industry.
3. Cheerfulness; exercise in the open air.
4. The judicious use of the bath.
5. Attention to diet; early-rising; repose.

6. Watchfulness over the state of the skin, and alimentary canal.

7. An equilibrium between mind and body.

The consideration of these matters requires much time. I propose to say a few words on the subjects of air and cleanliness.

The sources of an impure atmosphere are—

1. A defective ventilation.
2. The existence of noxious vapours, dust, and other extraneous bodies.
3. Combustion and the respiration of animals.
4. The presence of disease.

The remedies for it are as follow—

1. The windows and doors being properly situated and regulated.
2. The chimneys being neither obstructed, nor blocked up with furniture.
3. The removal of all filth from the apartments.
4. The regulation of all privies, drains, common-sewers, and gully-holes; cleansing and fumigating.
5. The constant removal of offal and mud from the gutters, stagnant pools of water, &c.
6. By frequently washing and sweeping the courts, alleys, and habitations.
7. By regulating all adjacent manufactories which might otherwise contaminate the atmosphere.
8. By so regulating the buildings as to admit a free circulation of pure air.

The Habitations of the Poor.

In order to promote these various objects, no inconsiderable vigilance is requisite: and it must be obvious to every one that we cannot hope to eradicate or prevent disease where the inhabitants are thoughtless, unless attention to such matters be rigidly enforced. The prevalence of the cholera, in one respect, did good; for it occasioned the removal of many nuisances of the existence of which people had previously no conception: the actual state of the courts and alleys was ascertained, and many of the lowest and most unhealthy were painted, cleansed, and

Mortality
in London
compared
with that in
the country

whitewashed. As the poor, however, seldom live long in one place, it is not enough to visit them periodically, for fresh nuisances arise, and if these are not removed at once, there is no telling what mischief they may generate; there are, indeed, certain spots from which fever is hardly ever absent. It is surely, then, a serious duty in us to inquire into the cause of such an affliction. It was stated on a recent occasion in parliament that the mortality in Middlesex during the last year, (and this chiefly in London,) amounted to 1 in 36, whereas in Cardiganshire, it was as low as 1 in 73, and according to the medical evidence taken by the Poor Law Medical Committee, this loss of life in London and its suburbs, is to be ascribed to the effects arising from "effluvial poisons." The circumstances which give rise to these are best examined by reference to facts.

The Probable Causes of Disease.

Effluvial
poisons.

In the report of the Medical Commissioners appointed to investigate the causes of epidemic fever in London, it was stated that "in the fields behind Euston-square, towards Somers Town, now occupied by the commencement of the Birmingham Railway, there was until lately, near some extensive cow-sheds, the meeting of several public drains or sewers in an open ditch which often overflowed, and covered a considerable space with a lake of the most odious filth. In the neighbourhood of this field, typhoid fevers were frequent, and in a school of 150 female children in Clarendon-square, Somers Town, every year while the nuisance was at its height, the malaria caused some remarkable form of disease. In one year it was an extraordinary nervous affection, exhibiting rigid spasms, and the convulsions of the limbs, such as occur on taking various poisons into the stomach—more than 30 of the girls were so affected. In another year it was typhoid fever, affecting an equal number of the children—in another, ophthalmia—in another, extraordinary constipation of the bowels, and so forth. Since the covering of the drains, all these diseases have disappeared."* If in a modern neighbourhood, like that of Euston-square, which is open and well ventilated, the effluvia arising from the sewers could be productive of such disastrous consequences,

* See the "Morning Herald," August 15th, 1838.

what might we not expect in the close and densely populated districts of Cripplegate and St. Luke's, where the same nuisance exists? But, I shall be told that the sewers are not open—there are no ditches in the city! To which I answer that in many, (I might say, I believe, the majority,) of these regions, and in situations where it would hardly be credited, there are *no sewers at all*, and the stench arising from the cess-pools, privies, and the drains, where there are any, is so great, that an open ditch could not be much worse. Until about three months ago, there were no sewers even in Cheapside, Fore-street, Barbican, &c., and they are making sewers at the present time in many of the other leading thoroughfares! Some idea, then, may be formed of the state in which the by-lanes and obscure alleys have been, and still are. There is not a more common source of fever than the decomposition of animal and vegetable matter; and in confined situations, where the inhabitants are continually exposed to the influence of the debilitating effects of the offensive vapours which arise from it, I have no hesitation in saying that fever is invariably to be found. I could mention many places, which from personal experience, I know to be full of disease: take as instances, Angel Alley, Moor Lane, Bull Yard, Fann Street, and the rookeries of Upper and Lower White-cross Streets, and Golden Lane.

Common-sewers, cess-pools, drains, &c.

Case 1. I attended in White Rose Court, White-cross Street, a whole family, consisting of the mother (a widow) and six children, who were all ill of malignant typhus; the mother and two of the children were delirious, the mother so much so that she would have taken up the entire attention of a nurse, had there been one; the only attendant, however, was the old grandmother, who notwithstanding the deplorable and destitute state in which they were, spent all she could get in gin. They had but one bed amongst them, and that a bundle of straw upon the floor, with scarcely any covering. I wrote to the parish officers, who very kindly sent a change of linen, a blanket, and seven shillings for their relief; one of the shillings the mother *swallowed* in a paroxysm of fever! By constantly watching the cases, and aided by the services of a neighbour who occasionally officiated as nurse, I am happy to say, they all got well.

Gin-drinking, neglect, misery

Case 2. In Currier's Hall Court, (No. 9,) I had a family consisting of the mother and three children, all down at the same time, with scarlet fever. They recovered, but their condition was no doubt aggravated by the debilitating

effects of the atmosphere which they were compelled to inhale; and I was informed that only a few doors off, in the same court, three children lay dead of the same disease at that very time! As often as I went to the house I was annoyed by the effluvia from the drains and privy, and my patients changed their residence when convalescent, in consequence of this nuisance. Such is the force of habit, that some people are hardly aware of its existence, though to a stranger the stench is intolerable; the pernicious effects are nevertheless equally felt; and this is particularly the case in close, hot weather, when the atmosphere is still and lowering. It is complained of very generally throughout the city, and it is productive of the most serious results. Few persons, I believe, escape indisposition at first; by degrees, I suppose, if they are well off in other respects, they become *seasoned*! Sir John Pringle has related terrible accounts of the ravages among the troops in consequence of inattention to the situation and condition of the *camp-privies*!

Case 3. In Angel Alley, Moor Lane, I attended a family of seven individuals, who were all attacked with a malignant fever in succession, and of which the mother had died before I was called in. They had been once in decent circumstances, but latterly misfortune had pressed so heavily upon them, that they were destitute of the most common necessities. They had but one bed, and that a bundle of shavings; their practice was to lie down and watch by turns, but when overcome by sickness, they had no alternative but to stretch their emaciated bodies on the same miserable pallet. They had not even a change of linen, and their covering was so scanty that they were glad to avail themselves of an old coat belonging to the poor father, who lay by the side of two of his daughters, one twelve, the other fifteen years of age. The parish had refused to bury the mother, and the bed on which she died had been burned as a safeguard to the survivors. I never in my life met with an instance of such real distress as this family presented, associated with such exemplary fortitude. They bore their trials apparently without a murmur, they never once complained to me; and it was not until they had parted with nearly all they possessed, that I ascertained the extent of their misery. It was too much for the old man; he had laboured hard to bring up his family respectably, but being out of work, and losing his wife as he did, he could not bear to see his children in such an abject condition, and sickening around him in quick succession;

Effluvial
poisons.

Sir John
Pringle
and the
army.

Misfor-
tune,
Mental
Affliction,
Destitu-
tion.

he pined in silence, and at length became himself the victim of a broken heart. The rest recovered. I succeeded in obtaining for them a temporary relief, and it was gratefully acknowledged.* *The court was an ill-ventilated "cul de sac," and the common privy was close to and in front of their door.*

The whole of this district is a perfect nest of disease, and fever is to be seen there in high perfection. It is in such places as these that epidemics rage and are fostered. Union Buildings, Angel Alley, Hartshorn Court, and some other of the avenues leading out of Moor Lane, and similar situations, are, I may say, a hot-bed of contagion. They are strewn with decayed vegetables, and filth of all kinds; we see pools of stagnant water, quantities of black mud, and heaps of rubbish, not only in the corners, but sometimes obstructing the gutters, and the buildings are so arranged that it is hardly possible there can be any thing like a free circulation of air.

Effluvial
Poisons.

Defective
Ventila-
tion.

I have had a great many cases in this neighbourhood, and whenever I am called to a fresh one, I am pretty sure to find fever: it generally happens too that the disease has made some progress before relief is sought.

Case 4. An instance of this kind occurred to me at the house of a blacksmith in Hartshorn Court. The sister sank under a low fever; another female was attacked, and then a third; at last the blacksmith himself was taken ill, but being a man of intemperate habits he did not apply for advice until his case was hopeless: he died on the third day. The two females being convalescent, I thought it sufficient to visit them only every other day, and I never shall forget the condition of the apartment on my second such visit. The blacksmith had been dead nearly five days, and no coffin had been procured; the body was in a high state of decomposition; one of the females lay huddled up in something like a bed on the floor; an infant that had but just recovered from illness, (the result of neglect) was sleeping on a bundle of rags in another corner; and the elder female, barely able to crawl about, was administering to the wants of her companion, surrounded by every variety of rubbish.

Dissipa-
tion,
Misery,
Neglect.

Filth.

Case 5. Another family fell under my care at No. 3, Carr Square, Moor Lane, to outward appearance a very respectable place, but the house in question was rendered

Misfor-
tune.

* For the benefit which I was thus enabled to confer on this family, (and on another in Carr Square, which I shall mention presently,) I am indebted to the kindness of a friend, to whom I had accidentally spoken of their condition. I also made a successful application to the parish.

Effluvial
Poisons.

unfit for human beings to dwell in, by the stench arising from the drains, &c. As in all such instances, I took care to provide the inmates with plenty of chloride of lime to throw about, but it did not check the fever, which had already infected the walls. I attended three of the children one after the other; no sooner were they convalescent, than the mother, a truly industrious woman, sickened: she became delirious and bed-ridden. Unable to suckle her infant, it was taken from her, but was seized with erysipelas, emaciated, and died. The sister's turn came next, and for some time the two females shared the same bed. Their sufferings were very great; the father earned sixteen shillings a week, and had six persons to support. Through the interest of the relieving officer, I procured for them some linen, another bed, and a little pecuniary aid. By unremitting watchfulness they were ultimately restored, but a short time afterwards the father was taken ill, he became delirious, and was removed to St. Luke's. No sooner was he cured, and returned home, than one of the elder boys was attacked, and was conveyed to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he died.

Effluvial
Poisons.

Case 6. In Vincent Court, Silver Street, I have had more than one case of fever in the same house, referrible, as I conceive, mainly to this cause; and to my knowledge several children have been attacked with a low, insidious disease there, which, in some instances, proved fatal.

Fever no
respector
of persons.

It is unnecessary to multiply cases; the nuisance of which I now complain exists very generally, and calls loudly for redress. How far it can be rectified is another question; my object in writing this essay is simply to call the attention of the authorities to evils which are in continual operation, and to illustrate their consequences by facts that have come under my notice. If any suppose that the scenes which I have displayed to their view, are over-drawn, let them but take the trouble to inquire for themselves, and they will discover their mistake. God forbid that all should be equally wretched; some of the working classes are well off, and with them sickness is deprived of half its horrors; but when once we behold in the same wasted form, the ghastly pallid cheek and sunken eye, and the unmeaning gaze of insensibility, alternating with the burning glow of excitement, and the wild unsettled glance of a mind diseased,—there is but a shade of difference between the rich and the poor,—the prospect is at best doubtful;—we may hope all things, but it behoves us, in either case, to be prepared for the worst.

State of the Courts and Alleys.

The situation of the gully-holes and privies, and the state of the drains and gutters, are subjects of the first importance, as regards the habitations of the poor. We find them very commonly just beneath a window, or before a door, and obstructed by offal and filth. Nothing can be worse: for noxious effluvia are continually emanating from them, and they are productive of the most malignant forms of fever. The gas which is poured forth from these sinks is the sulphuretted hydrogen, identical with that which is generated in all graves, cess-pools, common sewers, and the like; it also results from soap-boilers' lees, rotten eggs, and the decomposition of all animal matter. It is a most active poison when undiluted, and it is productive of the most baneful effects, yet the landlords of the poor unthinkingly neglect to consider this, for in some places there are no sewers, and yet the drains and cess-pools are allowed to continue in a very bad state; they are seldom examined I suppose, and not too frequently emptied.* We must cease to wonder that disease should spread if such a state of things be encouraged. We have lately had a melancholy opportunity of observing the deleterious nature of this gas, and which at the same time forcibly illustrates the impropriety of burying the dead in the heart of a populous city, to say nothing of the crowded state of many of our places of interment. The following is an extract from the police reports, as given by the "Morning Herald" of September 8th.

Gutters,
Gully-
holes,
Privies.

Sulphu-
retted
Hydrogen
Gas.

Places of Interment.

"Inspector Maclean brought intelligence to the justice-room, that two men had lost their lives in a grave in Aldgate Church-yard. The grave digger, Thomas Oaks, had, he stated, been overpowered by the unwholesome air while digging a grave, and was found lying dead at the bottom; and a bricklayer's labourer, Edward Liddett, who went into the grave to ascertain what was the matter, having been in the habit of visiting all sorts of confined and mephitic places, lost his life in the experiment. A vast num-

* "Sulphuretted hydrogen appears to be one of the most unrespirable of all the gases, for a small bird died immediately in air containing only $\frac{1}{7500}$ of its volume of sulphuretted hydrogen: a dog perished in air mingled with $\frac{1}{500}$; and a horse in air containing $\frac{1}{250}$."—*Thenard*, i. 723.

ber of persons assembled in the church-yard, but the police prevented any confusion, and the bodies were taken to Aldgate Workhouse, where means were resorted to for the restoration of life.

“In several of the church-yards, notwithstanding the fact that bodies are packed close together in the graves, it does not appear that the authorities at all interfere to prevent further accumulation. If the power lay with the magistrates, there is no doubt that there would be an immediate exercise of it. To what must the health of a neighbourhood surrounding one of these burial grounds be exposed continually, when in an instant two able-bodied men were deprived of life a few yards below the surface !”

It appeared that the grave was eighteen feet deep, and that Oaks had commenced digging it in the morning. It is very seldom, I believe, that a grave is dug to such a depth, and it is probable that the friable state of the adjoining graves admitted the escape of a quantity of mephitic air from the mouldering bodies which they contained, and which would therefore accumulate in the vault beneath. The man had gone in and out with impunity in the morning, but after the accident others attempted to go down, having previously thrown in some quick lime and chloride of lime. When, however, they had descended only a few feet, they became faint, and were obliged to come out again. When the bodies were removed they were quite livid.

Sulphu-
retted
Hydrogen
Gas.

Drains and Common Sewers.

The houses of the poor are often infested with rats, which are either poisoned or get locked up in the drains, where they die, and become a source of annoyance. So true is this, that in the neighbourhood of Billingsgate and Tower Hill, a very curious sight, I understand, may be sometimes witnessed. There are such quantities of rats in the drains and elsewhere, owing to the abundant supply of offal, and the contiguity of the Thames, that cats are attracted in great numbers to the spot, and regularly take up their abode in the drains and sewers. I am assured that it is no uncommon thing, if we look down the gratings there, to see and hear several cats that have entered after their prey, or been maliciously put down, and being unable to get out—live and die there !

Gully-holes.

The bars of the gratings which cover the generality of gully-holes, are placed at such a distance from each other, that the offal of the courts and alleys is frequently washed down, and there clogging up the way, and becoming putrid, it sends forth most offensive and faint effluvia. Sometimes the refuse of fish may be seen there, and now and then a dead kitten, as well as vegetable matters, in a state of decomposition. It would be better, perhaps, if the bars could be placed uprightly against the wall of a house, instead of horizontally as they generally are, and more closely together; the fluid part would then escape equally well, whilst the solid matter would be more likely to remain for the scavenger to remove.

Sulphu-
retted
Hydrogen
Gas.

Causes which Predispose to Fever.

I have invariably observed that fever most frequently occurs in those situations where the dwellings are worst drained; and I attribute the low, insidious, and malignant character of the fever in a great degree, to the depressing influence of the bad smells which arise in consequence, and these are chiefly to be referred to the generation of this gas. Close, murky, sultry weather, when the atmosphere is loaded with moisture, favours these pernicious effects most materially, especially as the body is then usually most predisposed to fever, owing to the debility which is at such times more or less experienced, and the languid state of the circulation. All sources of debility, whether intemperance,* want of proper food and clothing, watchfulness, and the like, heighten these effects, and invariably render the body prone to disease, especially when from neglect of the bath, the pores of the skin have become clogged up with scurf and excrementitious matter, the cuticle itself being thickened and dry, owing to obstructed perspiration. The skin, it should be remembered, is both a secreting and an absorbing surface. The insensible perspiration amounts on the average to about two pounds in the course of twenty-four hours, and when this is interrupted, it will be easily imagined that considerable inconvenience must result, and as a natural

The Skin.

* "In the northern district of London, containing 250,000 human beings, have been erected 300 gin palaces, upwards of 900 public houses, and more than 300 beer shops!"—*Report of the North London Auxiliary Temperance Society.*

Want of
Cleanli-
ness.

consequence, heat and thirst, in fact—*fever*! On the other hand, the skin absorbs filth when applied to it, by being in contact with the clothing, and thus, together with improper food, will irritate, and so derange the animal economy, as to produce nausous and disgusting eruptions. That eruptions on the skin are always accompanied with more or less of fever is pretty generally understood, and when all things are considered, it is not wonderful that eruptive diseases should be more common among the poor than with their more affluent neighbours. I think that the smoke of London contributes to the salubrity of this great city. It seems to have the same effect as tobacco, and all other means of fumigation, *i. e.* it acts by destroying the effluvia which are continually arising from so many noxious bodies. All persons have read the accounts which have been transmitted to us of the plague, and its effects. The disease broke out in the most crowded and ill-ventilated parts of the town; it raged there with unabated fury for a considerable time, and its ravages were only checked at last by the dreadful fire which ensued. The practice of smoking, so general among the poor, must be considered highly beneficial, I think, on the same principle. Still it should not be carried to excess.

London.
Smoke
and To-
bacco.

Plague.

The Cleansing of Courts and Alleys.

I am bound to add my testimony to that of others, that many of the obscurer courts and alleys are not so well swept and cleansed as they ought to be; sometimes they are to be found in a most filthy state. It is important that they should be thoroughly cleansed once every day, and *before dark*, or it cannot be done properly, and the night air is moreover peculiarly favourable to the distribution of mephitic gas, which the stirring up of accumulated heaps of decomposing substances will always disengage. The poor have no way of disposing of their cabbage leaves, potato-parings, fish bones, and other offal, than to throw them before the door, or in a corner of the court, where, if suffered to accumulate, as they sometimes do, decomposition ensuing, they furnish a prolific source of malaria.* Having seen a great deal of Asiatic cholera during my residence in Egypt and Syria, I was appointed by the Board

* The effluvia which arise from putrescent substances, and more especially those generated in certain putrid disorders, have a tendency to create peculiar diseases, or to give the living body a tendency to produce poisons analogous to themselves."—*Prof. Brande, Manual of Chemistry*, vol. iii. p. 174.

of Health at Cambridge, to investigate the subject at Ely; I was then particularly struck, as in other places, with the fact, that the disease only prevailed in the low parts of the town, even confining itself to particular spots, and to one side of the way, where this and similar nuisances existed; and the same may be said of the continued lurking of insidious, congestive complaints in London. Some of the narrow streets are crowded with barrows of vegetables and fish, and the road becomes strewn with all sorts of offensive matter in consequence; the gutters are often clogged up, and the foul water cannot easily escape. It not unfrequently happens too, that the bad state of the pavement causes large holes, which retain not only stagnant water, but mud and other filth. In my opinion it is not sufficient to *sweep* the courts and gutters, they ought to be *washed* once a day, or every other day at least. The poor might be made to do it themselves. Let the inmates of each house wash before their own dwelling, and be subject to a fine for neglect. There is no want of water, and if there were, the water which the numerous steam engines furnish, and which I believe is sometimes allowed to run to waste, might possibly be turned to account. I am very glad to find that this subject has attracted the notice of others as well as myself, and that it is likely to come before parliament. The following article appeared in the "Morning Herald" of the 17th August:—

"Filth and the Poor Law Commissioners. (From a Government Paper.) The health of the metropolis is likely, we fear, to be endangered by the refusal of the Union Auditors, in which they have been sanctioned by the Poor Law Commissioners, to allow in the accounts the sums charged for the removal of unhealthy nuisances.

"It is only necessary to pass through the streets and lanes in the neighbourhoods of our great public markets, in which putrid vegetable substances produce a miasma offensive to the sense, and speedily dangerous to health, to estimate the mischief of allowing the streets to remain uncleansed of such substances. During the fearful visitation of cholera in 1832 and 1833, it was ascertained that the disease was most rife in those districts in which there was the presence of filth, and a deficiency of ventilation. If at this season of the year, the metropolitan districts be left without funds for purposes so essential to the public safety, the consequences may be fearful. Mr. Hawes drew the attention of the Home Secretary to the subject last night in the House of Commons, and his lordship promised to introduce a bill

Cholera
and Con-
gestive
Disease.

Stagnant
Water,
Filth, and
Offal.

Public
Markets.

next session, to enable the parishes to raise funds for the special purpose referred to." *Cavendo tutus*. It is too late to look for the remedy when the evil has arrived !

Condition of the Labouring Classes of London during Sickness and in Health.

There is, I am persuaded, no country where the working classes are so much respected as in England ; but in spite of all our exertions to improve their moral condition, we shall be lamentably disappointed if we do not attend to their comforts too. This is not to be done always by giving away money. Experience proves that high wages are no guarantee for respectability ; it often happens that a labouring man with a large family is more decent in appearance, and more comfortable than his neighbour with twice the means. But there are certain things which may suddenly plunge a whole family into misery, over which they have no control, and these ought to be provided against by their betters. As long as an industrious man is able to work, he is willing to work ; he loves his children, and is proud to support them—but if suddenly disabled by an accident, or overtaken by sickness, what is he to do ? In addition to his bodily suffering, he then has the pangs of grief to endure, and his recovery is impeded in consequence ; incapacitated for labour, his wages are stopped, and if he have not taken the precaution to join some club, he is without resource. He might go to the hospital himself, but how are his family to live ? The love he bears his children has induced him to hold up as long as he could, and we often have reason to regret that advice was so long unsought, as some of the most serious maladies may be cut short, if taken in time, and there are public dispensaries which afford gratuitous relief to the poor at their own homes. Were it not for such excellent institutions, the condition of these useful members of society would be deplorable indeed. A man may not only be overtaken by ill health himself, but he may have a sick wife ; and there are the complaints of his children to contend with. How is he to pay a medical attendant ? An attempt is often made to do so, and being prejudiced against hospitals and gratuitous relief, the poor will occasionally part with their furniture and clothes ; but they are obliged perhaps to give way at last. These are the more thoughtless and improvident of them. But how often do we see a whole family attacked

Hospitals
and Dis-
pensaries.

at one time by an epidemic fever! What is to become of them? The public have no idea of these things. A very humane writer on this subject, has remarked with great truth, that "a single case of destitution close to our own doors, affects us more than a thousand such cases dispersed in distant country parishes:—still less is our sensibility affected, when the sufferings endured do not exhibit themselves in a visible form, as immediate consequences of a privation of the necessities of life. If we heard that a whole family had been found dead in their beds from starvation, we should be struck with horror; but the suffering is not less, or less real, (it is even greater because more prolonged) if they are so debilitated by a continued privation of needful food and clothing, or gradually to fall victims under the attacks of fever, consumption, or dropsy."

Destitution and Disease.

The Philanthropic Efforts of the Private Hygeist.

That very many families do suffer these protracted miseries, there is no doubt, and it is in the power of every good citizen to contribute to their relief, in some way or other. Those who make it their daily occupation to visit the sick, are always able to point out the objects that are the most deserving of pity. Too much sympathy does harm, and it is difficult for the beneficent stranger to know when to stop. But the minister of the parish and the medical officers of public institutions always know how to discriminate between the idle and the industrious, the profligate and the virtuous; and they are ready to lend their aid in time of need, and to co-operate with the philanthropic and charitable. I think that much good has been done by the establishing of penny clubs, by which the labouring classes are provided with the more common necessities at little or no expense, especially with coals, shoes, and blankets, during the most inclement seasons; and I am also of opinion that the system lately adopted of empowering parish officers to lend out blankets, bedding, clean linen, &c., to those who are sick and destitute, works well, and cannot be too much extended; for I am certain that many a life has thereby been saved, whereas without such assistance, the efforts of a medical man would have been unavailing. The same may be said in regard to nursing. I have frequently had to attend the destitute sick who were helpless, and sometimes bed-ridden, yet without any other

attendant than a child, or a neighbour. Such patients are usually left for hours alone, although afflicted with paralysis, consumption, dropsy, or fever. I have known a patient so left, get out of bed and be seized with a fainting fit, and die. In like manner has the deluded maniac done injury to himself and others; and many, during a paroxysm of fever, have been found in the street almost in a state of nudity. I conceive therefore, that not only should a temporary nurse be provided for such poor creatures, but that in every parish there should be some spare building to which fever-patients might be conveyed, on a proper representation being made to the overseers. If such a plan were adopted, we should often have the satisfaction of cutting short disease, or of preventing its extension. As I have already stated, we should be in a great bustle to provide something of this kind if the cholera were to pay us another visit; why not then steal a march upon the phantom, and be prepared for it when it comes? Every day of our lives we have to treat cases as awful and as fatal as the cholera, and heightened by the most abject destitution. One Sunday afternoon I was requested to visit a patient at a lodging house in Long Lane. I found a poor friendless Irishman ill of a fever; on my second visit there were two; the next day the servant girl was attacked, and sent home. The people of the house became alarmed for their own safety, and the credit of their establishment: besides, they were unable to attend upon the poor fellows, and the medicine designed for the one, was taken by the other. On representing the case to the parish officers, I procured them a nurse, and eventually succeeded in getting them removed to the Fever Hospital;—it is more than probable that had the first of these patients been attended to in time, the others would have escaped.* In a great country like this, an effort should be made to establish also *convalescent* hospitals, to which the poor might be conveyed, when labouring under the debility which usually follows a serious illness; and I sincerely hope that the exertions of Dr. Garrett Dillon, whose benevolent letter on this subject

* This poor man had applied at St. Bartholomew's on Friday; I saw him on the Sunday; Thursday being taking-in day, he could not be admitted, otherwise he might have been spared perhaps a serious illness. But it was unavoidable. All hospitals have their taking-in day, and there is but one each week; accidents only are admitted at other times; and chronic tedious cases, asthma, consumption, and the like, are seldom admitted at all. Thus dispensaries administer to the poor man's necessities without delay, and at a time when every other hope is lost.

appeared in the "Morning Herald" of Sept. 4th, will meet with the co-operation of the patriotic and the rich; for surely he who, without ostentation, devotes his time and his fortune to the encouragement of science and the arts, and who labours to provide an asylum for his destitute and enfeebled countrymen, that they may be restored to their anxious families and their homes, is equally entitled to our admiration and gratitude as the heroes who have defended us from the threatened terrors of the invader, whether by sea or by land! Disease once conquered, change of air will often do more towards the restitution of a patient, than all the medicine he could take, especially if confined to the unwholesome precincts of a public hospital. Without it he may linger on in a feeble state for months. This particularly applies to the aged, and those whose constitutions have become impaired by climate, or previous illness, whose complaints have assumed a chronic form, or who may have been the subjects of surgical operations. It matters not what the cause of a man's misfortune may be, his destitute condition should be his passport for the sake of his family as well as himself, or he may be seized with remorse and die in despair. A fit of illness often reforms a man, and brings him to his senses; should it then please the Almighty to send him help and consolation even at the eleventh hour, who can tell but that his earthly trials and tribulations may be turned to his eternal good?—and if so, we may be instrumental in saving the soul as well as the body. I know that there is a great objection made to hospitals of whatever denomination; but necessity has no law, and objections founded on ignorance may be overruled. A large proportion of the poor, however, are differently disposed; and sorry am I to say it, the greatest share of destitution is often allotted to those, who, though industrious and upright have been unfortunate. Medical men are sometimes called upon to witness the most heart-rending scenes, and their avocations lead them to the bedside of persons so reduced, that worn down by affliction, they find themselves, it may be, in the evening of life, altogether without resource, notwithstanding they had once been happy:—

"Had known the luscious sweets of plenty; every night
Had slept with soft content about their head,
And never wak'd but to a joyful morning."

The feelings of such persons cannot be too much respected; their condition demands our warmest sympathy,

and we may rest assured that there is no gratitude more sincere than that which kindness so disinterestedly bestowed, generally calls forth. Such persons feel any little attention most keenly ; perhaps they exaggerate its value ; but we cannot regard them in the same light as persons who have been differently brought up, and who have never known the value of an education. It is a great blessing that there is a provision made for them in the hour of their trial, and that they can be attended in the privacy of their own home. This is a boon which is granted to the English poor through the medium of our Dispensaries, than which more useful charities do not exist, when properly managed, and not *abused*. If then we really feel for the misfortunes of others, and would endeavour to relieve them, our first step should be to see to the proper ventilation, cleansing and purifying of the courts and alleys, as well as of the houses in which the poor reside.

The Poor Man's Home.

Ventila-
tion.

Epidemic fevers invariably break out in the most crowded districts. Many of the habitations are ill-contrived ; there is not sufficient attention paid to their ventilation ; the courts in which they are built are sometimes culs de sacs, and they are shut in by manufactories and other lofty buildings, so that there is no free current of air through them. The relative situation of the windows and doors is bad, and the windows open only at the lower part instead of the upper part ; it often happens therefore that they are not opened at all, especially during sickness, on account of the draught. We not unfrequently find a family of six or eight persons living in one or at most two small rooms, obstructed in every part with furniture (perhaps a mangle) so that the boards are seldom scoured. It is here that the inmates have to eat, cook, sleep, and wash, and sometimes carry on their work. The window being firmly closed, there is literally no ventilation ; and on opening the door, we are saluted by a stream of hot, bad air, as we enter ; the stench is sometimes intolerable to those who have just left the street ; and if there happen to be one or two sick persons in the room, I leave any one to judge what the condition of the apartment must be ! Is it wonderful that disease should spread ? The only wonder is that it is ever absent ! If the window could be opened at the top, were it

but two inches, the foul air would be able to escape, and the cold air might enter without inconveniencing the inmates. But it occasionally happens that such tenements belong to individuals who do not interest themselves about the poor man's comforts, and they will not spend a sixpence upon them if they can help it! The labouring classes might contribute greatly to their own health and enjoyment if they could be induced to white-wash their dwellings now and then, if the landlord will not do it: the cost would be very trifling, and they might do it without any sacrifice of time. Light is very conducive to health; for independently of other effects, it cheers the spirits, and tends to make men contented. With the same view I would suggest, that the exterior of all the buildings where the poor congregate, should be white-washed regularly once a year; autumn is the best time, as preparatory to the most gloomy period, and its effect would be appreciated.

Cleanliness and Light.

Necessity of Public Baths in every great City.

I propose to conclude this already too lengthy address, by a few words on the subject of bathing. It is certainly a great reproach to us as a nation that we have no *public* baths! I mean baths for the *gratuitous* use of the poor. In former days, there was no important city without them; and in modern times they are to be found in France, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Turkey, Egypt, and Arabia, to my knowledge, and for aught I know, many other countries; but in England there are none, although there is an infinitely better supply of water than elsewhere. In this respect we must blush when we acknowledge that we are so far behind our neighbours! What a disgusting thing it is to reflect as we walk through the streets, that so many thousands never wash themselves from one year's end to the other. Some of the men do occasionally bathe in the Thames, the New River, and other places, but what provision is there for women and children?

It is not my purpose to enter further upon this subject; it could only be done justice to in a volume devoted to itself. The labouring classes, especially the females, would with few exceptions, be very glad to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from the bath, if they had the opportunity; and if there is one thing calculated more than another to fortify the body against cold, it is the habitual but judicious use of the bath; as a curative agent,

the hot bath is invaluable, for there are few diseases in which it may not be advantageously employed. At the General Dispensary, we are in the habit of lending out tin baths to the patients, and the poor would apply for them still more frequently than they do, could they but obtain a supply of hot water. The want of public baths is greatly felt, especially in the metropolis; I sincerely hope and trust that the subject may be taken up by the government, and that it, together with the other questions referred to in these pages, may receive the sanction and co-operation of the public at large; for not only do they concern the well-being of thousands of our fellow-creatures, but our character as a great and powerful nation.

149, *Aldersgate Street*,
16th November, 1838.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introductory Remarks.—Fever and the London Hospitals	3
The Science of Hygeia.....	7
Health and Longevity	12
The Habitations of the Poor	13
The Probable Causes of Disease.....	14
State of the Courts and Alleys.....	19
Places of Interment	19
Drains and Common Sewers	20
Gully-holes	21
Causes which predispose to Fever	21
The Cleansing of Courts and Alleys	22
Condition of the Labouring Classes of London during Sickness and in Health	24
The Philanthropic Efforts of the Private Hygeist	25
The Poor Man's Home	28
Necessity of Public Baths in every great City	29

